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## **Deportation Flights**

I appreciate that concerns have been raised about recent deportation flights, including concerns over individual circumstances, COVID-19, and worries following the Windrush scandal.

Where individual circumstances are a concern, it is of course vital that the Government ensures due process has been undertaken for all people who are being deported and that they are afforded proper representation.

Regarding COVID-19, it is of course important that those due to be on flights are not put at risk of infection. The Government has already been warned by the High Court about its approach to the asylum system regarding COVID-19. I hope it is now taking the lessons learnt from outbreaks at Napier Barracks and Brook House and applying them to other settings.

I recognise that there are serious concerns that the injustices of the Windrush scandal could be repeated. As we know, members of the Windrush generation were deported illegally in recent years, while being denied access to healthcare, housing and employment due to the Government's "hostile environment" policies. While the Government has generally committed to the recommendations made in Wendy Williams' Lessons Learned review around the Windrush scandal, it has given no clear timetable for their implementation. Given the Government's record on Windrush, I believe it is right to question whether the necessary and appropriate due diligence has been undertaken in relation to those on deportation flights.

I do not oppose the policy of deporting dangerous criminals. However, a robust system is needed to ensure people are not unlawfully removed. This is why the Shadow Immigration Minister and others often raise these matters with the Home Office and will continue to do so.

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